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# OT 611 Historical Books of the Old Testament

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**ASBURY THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY**  
**Department of Inductive Biblical Studies**

**OT(IBS)611**

**Historical Books of the Old Testament**

**Bauer**

**Spring 2006**

**I. General Description**

A series of book studies including Joshua through 2 Kings which builds on the methodology of the first Inductive Bible Study course by further use of what has been previously learned and by emphasizing the study of books as wholes. Accordingly, there is a special focus on the initial survey of books as wholes, the interpretation of parts of books in the context of the book as a whole, and the synthesis of books. In addition, attention is given to thinking, valuing, and living biblically by learning how to apply Scripture to life and ministry. This course seeks intentionally to incorporate the grammatical analysis of the Hebrew language into the overall inductive process.

**II. Course Objectives**

- A. Methodology. The emphasis will be upon the observation and interpretation of books as wholes. By the end of the course, the student should be able to do the following:
1. Employ structural observations for the interpretation of individual passages within the book, as well as for the interpretation of the book as a whole.
  2. Raise various kinds of interpretive questions, and answer these questions, based on the use of exegetical determinants;
  3. Employ various kinds of relevant evidence, including that which involves exegetical use of the original languages, in a process of inferential reasoning for the interpretation of individual passages within the book, as well as for the book as a whole.
  4. Synthesize the interpretation of units of various lengths, such as the paragraph, the segment, the section (division), and the book as a whole;
  5. Use aspects of methodology that are especially relevant for narrative material;
  6. Evaluate and apply truths that emerge from the interpretation of the material.
  7. Articulate the major issues involved in the movement from text to proclamation; move from the interpretation and application of the text towards its proclamation; and integrate the interpretation and application of a passage in the Historical Books with that of a correlative passage from the New Testament so as to move toward a sermon (or teaching lesson) based on both an Old Testament and New Testament text.
- B. Content. The student should be able to do the following:
1. Think through the contents of each book of the Historical Books without recourse to the printed text;
  2. Identify significant passages in the Historical Books and interpret them contextually;
  3. Demonstrate the importance of a sound methodology for interpretation, including specific examples from these Historical Books;
  4. Describe thoroughly the meaning and development of major themes in the Historical Books, citing individual passages and other specific data to support conclusions;
  5. Discuss the historical and religious background of the Historical Books, demonstrating a general knowledge of critical problems regarding the Historical Books and an ability to use these data in the interpretation of the Historical Books.

- C. Attitude. The student should:
1. Appreciate the value of sound methodology for the interpretation of the biblical materials, resulting in a desire to apply the inductive method to other biblical books;
  2. Desire to make the Historical Books the object of intensive and creative study throughout life;
  3. Intend to employ seriously the Historical Books in preaching and teaching within the context of the church

### III. Course Texts

A. Required Texts:

*Revised Standard Version of the Bible* or *New Revised Standard Version of the Bible*.

*An Annotated Guide to Biblical Resources for Ministry*, by David R. Bauer

*Biblica Hebraica Stuttgartensia*, or *Interlinear Hebrew/English Old Testament*.

*Dictionary of the Old Testament Historical Books*. ed. By Bill T. Arnold and H.G.M. Williamson

### IV. Course Requirements

- A. The completion of the assigned lessons in writing, unless otherwise indicated by the instructor (all assigned lessons are in **bold**). All lessons are to be handed in at the end of the class period on the day designated. No late papers will be accepted save in cases in which permission is granted by the instructor based on emergency.
- B. Punctual attendance at all class sessions. Because of the importance of class attendance, and because of government regulations regarding student loans, a record of attendance will be taken at each class session. Absence at more than two class sessions will result in final grade penalty, and absence at more than four class sessions will result in loss of credit for the course. Exceptions may be granted based on emergency, in consultation with the instructor.
- C. A careful reading of the assigned portions of the required and collateral texts.
- D. A final examination based on the objectives of the course.

### V. Course Evaluation

- A. Assignments - 75%
- B. Final Exam - 25%

### VI. Lessons (Assignments will be announced on the first day of class. No work is expected to be done before the semester begins.)

- Lesson 1. Survey of Books as Wholes. The Book of Joshua.**  
**Read the entire book through at one sitting several times.**
1. **Identify the general specific materials of the book, giving a brief title to each chapter.**
  2. **Locate the main units and sub-units in the book, and identify the major structural relationships operative in the book as a whole.**
  3. **Ask a few interpretive questions regarding each major structural relationship observed.**
  4. **Identify the key verses and strategic areas which provide insight into the book as a whole. Give reasons for each selection in terms of structural significance.**
  5. **Note data bearing on such higher critical questions as the author, place and date of writing, recipients, unity of the book, etc.**
  6. **Note other major impressions relating to the book as a whole.**

7. After completing your own independent work, read the short discussions on this book in Childs and Schmidt, and write a one-paragraph critical interaction with these scholarly discussions.

**Lesson 2.** Survey of Segments as Wholes. Joshua 1:1-18

Survey Joshua 1:1-18, following these steps:

1. Give a brief title to each paragraph whereby its contents may be recalled by association.
2. Locate the main units and sub-units within the segment as a whole, and the major structural relationships operative in the segment as a whole.
3. Ask a few interpretive questions based on each major structural relationship observed.
4. Identify the key verses or strategic areas which provide insight into the segment as a whole.
5. Identify the literary form(s) employed in the segment.
6. Note other major impressions relating to the segment as a whole.

**Lesson 3.** Detailed Observation. Joshua 1:5-7.

1. Examine Joshua 1:5-7 in terms of a detailed observation. Do independent study only. Use MBS, pp. 31-36, 40-49, 72-79 as a guide. Ask interpretive questions relating to each observation made. If you can, make use of the Hebrew. See handout on detailed observation.
2. Identify the two or three most significant questions raised.

**Lesson 4.** Interpretation. Joshua 1:5-7.

Use the exegetical determinants outlined in MBS, pp. 135-65, to interpret Joshua 1:5-7.

Interpret the passage by selecting two or three of the most important questions raised in your detailed observation of the passage and by employing the exegetical determinants to answer these questions. See hand out on interpretation, and keep the following suggestions in mind:

1. Attempt to determine which exegetical determinants are relevant to the question being answered.
2. Begin with the most important determinants, and try to bring their evidence to bear on the interpretive question being answered.
3. Using inferential reasoning, indicate the possible conclusion or conclusions to which each piece of evidence points. These conclusions, or inferences, should point toward possible answers to the interpretive question. At the close of study, list the various pieces of evidence; if more than one is possible, indicate the data supporting each possibility. If evidence is conclusive, indicate your conclusion.
4. Make periodical summaries of your findings.

**Lesson 5.** Survey and Interpretation. Joshua 3-12.

1. Survey this section, employing the suggestions under Lesson 2 (omit paragraph titles).
2. *Interpretation.* Interpret this section (or a portion of it) on the basis of one or more structural relationships, interpretive question, major issues, or strategic areas identified in your survey. Or answer one or more of the following interpretive questions:
  - a. Identify the major elements surrounding Israel's crossing of the Jordan in chs. 3-5. What is the meaning and function of each? According to these chapters, what was the purpose behind the crossing of the Jordan in this fashion?
  - b. What is the meaning of 5:13-15, of 8:30-35, and of 9:20? How does each of these passages function within the section and illumine the section as a whole?
  - c. Identify and analyze the salient features of Israel's attacks upon the cities of Jericho and Ai in chs. 6-8 and of Israel's attacks upon the kings in chs. 9-11. Note especially the ways in which the contrasts in each of these units (i.e., in chs. 6-8, and in chs. 9-11) illumine the meaning and purpose of these accounts.
3. *Synthesis.*

- a. According to chs. 3-12, what specific factors were responsible for the conquest of the land?
- b. Explore the theological significance of the conquest of the land, according to this narrative.

**Lesson 6.** Survey and Interpretation. Joshua 13-22.

1. Survey this section, employing the suggestions under Lesson 5 (1).
2. *Interpretation.* Interpret this section (or a portion of it) on the basis of one or more structural relationships, interpretive questions, major issues, or strategic areas identified in your survey. Or answer one or more of the following interpretive questions.
  - a. What is the meaning of the account regarding Caleb's allotment (14:6-15; 15:13-19)? Why did the writer thus draw special attention to this allotment?
  - b. Note the tension between those passages which indicate that the conquest (and possession) was complete and those passages which indicate that the possession was yet incomplete (some of these passages are found outside the section). What is the meaning of this tension, and why did the writer allow this tension to stand?
  - c. Examine the account of the altar at the Jordan in ch. 22. What was the crucial issue? Why did the writer include this account, and why did he place it here in the book?
3. *Synthesis.*
  - a. Examine the relationship between this account of the distribution of the land (chs. 13-22) and the account of the conquest of the land (chs. 3-12). Specifically, what is the meaning of this relationship? Why this relationship? Implications?
  - b. What major theological issues emerge in this account of the distribution of the land?

**Lesson 7.** Survey and Interpretation. Joshua 23-24.

1. Survey this division, employing the suggestions under Lesson 5 (1)
2. *Interpretation.* Trace the thought of this division. What are the major themes which emerge in these chapters, and what is the meaning of each? In the course of your study, pay special attention to the contrasts that are employed.
3. *Synthesis.*
  - a. How does Joshua 23-24 climax the book? How does this climax illumine the Book of Joshua as a whole?
  - b. What is the function of the summary statement in 23:1-24:13 in the Book of Joshua as a whole?

**Lesson 8.** Synthesis of Joshua.

1. Examine the person, or character, of Joshua as it is presented in this book. How does the writer relate Joshua to Moses, and what is the meaning of this relationship?
2. What is the meaning of each of the following concepts in the Book of Joshua: rest; possess/possession; inherit/inheritance?
3. What is the theology of "the land" in the Book of Joshua?
4. What theological purpose (or purposes) stands behind the composition of the Book of Joshua?

**Lesson 9.** Survey of Books as Wholes. The Book of Judges.  
Survey the Book of Judges, employing the steps outlined in Lesson 1.

**Lesson 10.** Survey and Interpretation. Judges 1:1-2:5.

1. Survey this segment, employing the suggestions under Lesson 2.
2. *Interpretation.* Interpret this section (or a portion of it) on the basis of one or more structural relationships, interpretive questions, major issues, or strategic areas identified in your survey. Or answer one or more on the following interpretive questions:
  - a. Examine the contrasts within ch. 1, and explore the meaning of these contrasts. Why these contrasts?

- b. According to 2:1-5, why was Israel unable to drive out the inhabitants of the land? Analyze this paragraph, indicating its meaning, the reason why this explanation was included here, and the implications of this paragraph.
3. *Synthesis.*
  - a. How does this segment illumine the meaning of the Book of Judges as a whole?
  - b. How does 1:1-2:6 relate to the Book of Joshua?

**Lesson 11. Survey and Interpretation. Judges 2:6-3:6.**

1. Survey this segment, employing the suggestions under Lesson 2.
2. *Interpretation.* Trace the Logic of this segment. Identify the major elements found in 2:6-3:6; and investigate the meaning of each. Why did the writer wish to emphasize these elements?
3. *Synthesis.*
  - a. How does this passage illumine the meaning of the Book of Judges?
  - b. How does the remainder of the Book of Judges illumine this passage?

**Lesson 12. Survey and Interpretation. Judges 6:1-8:35.**

1. Survey this section, employing the suggestions under Lesson 5 (1).
2. *Interpretation.*
  - a. Examine carefully the character of Gideon, as it is presented here. Be creative, and (given the limitations of time) be as thorough as possible. Be careful to cite evidence for each assertion made.
  - b. Interpret 6:34; and 8:22-28. What is the meaning of each of these passages, and how does each function within the story of Gideon as a whole?
3. *Synthesis.* What major theological truths emerge from this story?

**Lesson 13. Survey and Interpretation. Judges 13:1-16:31.**

1. Survey this section, employing the suggestions under Lesson 5 (1).
2. *Interpretation.* Examine carefully the character of Samson, as it is presented here. Be analytical, creative, and relatively thorough. Be careful to cite evidence.
3. *Synthesis.* What are the major themes in this story, and what is the meaning of each? In the process note the major theological truths that emerge from this story and their relation to one another.

**Lesson 14. Evaluation, Application, and Proclamation. Judges 13:1-16:31.**

1. *Evaluation.* Having interpreted Judges 13:1-16:31, evaluate the Samson narrative. Write a brief statement (short paragraph) indicating as specifically, precisely, and concretely as possible the main truth or truths in the Samson narrative (taken from Lesson 13, especially part 3), and critically evaluate these teachings in order to determine if they can be taken over and directly applied or not with rational (i.e., evidence and arguments). If the teachings themselves cannot be directly applied, indicate implications from those teachings that are applicable.
2. *Application.* Ask a series of applicatory questions on the basis of your evaluation of this passage. In light of your circumstances (and the circumstances of those under your ministry), how would you answer these questions?  
*Proclamation.* Develop a proclamation outline. A proclamation outline is not synonymous with a sermon outline (which assumes homiletical crafting), but is rather the statement of a specific proclamation thesis, with three to five main points that develop that overall proclamatory thesis (and are clearly and explicitly related to each other). Each of these main points should itself be developed in a brief but specific paragraph, which describes the (theological) teaching derived from the interpretation of the text, the contemporary appropriation derived from the application process, and the connection between the two.

**Lesson 15.** Survey, Interpretation, and Evaluation and Application. Judges 17:1-21:25.

1. Survey this division, employing the suggestions under Lesson 5 (1).
2. *Interpretation.*
  - a. What are the major elements in each of these stories (i.e., the incident of Micah and the Danites in 17:1-18:31; and the incident of the Benjaminites in 19:1-21:25)? What is the meaning of each of these major elements? What is the meaning of each of these stories?
  - b. What is the relationship between these two stories? How do they illumine one another? Why are they thus placed here together?
  - c. Interpret 21:25. How does this final statement function in (and illumine) the Book of Judges?
3. *Synthesis.* Explore the function of chs. 17-21 in the Book of Judges as a whole. How do these chapters illumine 3:7-16:31?
4. *Application and Proclamation.* Follow steps described in Lesson 14.

**Lesson 16.** Synthesis of Judges.

1. What is the meaning of the recurring casual cycles found throughout 3:7-16:31? Why these recurring cycles?
2. What is the relationship between the so-called major or charismatic judges (Othniel, Ehud, Deborah, Gideon, Japhthan, and Samson) and the so-called minor or juridical judges mentioned throughout the book? Why this relationship?
3. What theological purpose (or purposes) stands behind the composition of the Book of Judges?

**Lesson 17.** Survey of Books as Wholes. The Book of 1 Samuel.

**Survey the Book of I Samuel, employing the steps outlined in Lesson 1.**

**Lesson 18.** Observation Survey and Interpretation. I Samuel 1:1-12:25.

1. Survey this division, employing the suggestions under Lesson 5 (1).
2. *Interpretation.*
  - a. Note the contrasts between Hannah and Samuel, on the one hand, and Eli and his sons, on the other. What is said regarding each of these parties, and what is the meaning of the differences between them? Why did these differences exist? Why did the writer contrast these parties in the way he did? Implications?
  - b. Examine carefully the character of Samuel, as it is presented throughout this division. Be analytical, creative, and relatively thorough. Be careful to cite evidence. What is the meaning of this presentation of Samuel? Why this presentation?
  - c. According to this division, what circumstances surrounded the rise of the monarch in Israel? What do these circumstances imply regarding the nature and the character of the people? According to this material, was the emergence of the monarchy a positive or negative development? Why?
3. *Synthesis.* What are the main contours of a theology of the community of faith which is presented in this material?
4. *Application and Proclamation.* Follow steps described in Lesson 14.

**Lesson 19.** Survey and Interpretation, and Evaluation and Application. I Samuel 13:1-31:13.

1. Survey this division, employing the suggestions under Lesson 5 (1).
2. *Interpretation.*
  - a. Examine the character of Saul in this material (use also the relevant material in 7:3-12:25). What is the meaning of this presentation of Saul? Why did Saul develop the way he did? Why did the writer present Saul in this way?

- b. Investigate the contrast between Saul and David in this division. What are the differences between Saul and David, and what is the meaning of these differences? Why was David anointed king in place of Saul? Implications?
3. *Synthesis.* According to this material, what causes one to be acceptable to God, and what causes one to be unacceptable to Him?
4. *Application and Proclamation.* Follow steps described in Lesson 14.

**Lesson 20.** Survey of Books as Wholes. The Book of II Samuel.  
Survey the Book of II Samuel, employing the steps outlined in Lesson 1.

- Lesson 21.** Survey and Interpretation. II Samuel 7:1-29.
1. Survey this segment, employing the suggestions under Lesson 2.
  2. *Interpretation.* Using the key verses or strategic areas which you have identified in your survey of the segment as a basis, interpret this segment. What is the meaning of this segment? Why did the writer include it here?
  3. *Synthesis.* How does this segment function within II Samuel 1-10, and within the Book of II Samuel as a whole? How does this segment illumine the entire division in which it is found?
  4. *Application and Proclamation.* Follow steps described in Lesson 14.

- Lesson 22.** Survey and Interpretation, and Evaluation and Application. II Samuel 11-12.
1. Survey this section, employing the suggestions under Lesson 5 (1).
  2. *Interpretation.* Trace the flow of thought in this material. Explore carefully the character and consequences of David's sin. What was the basis and nature of David's forgiveness?
  3. *Synthesis.*
    - a. What does this passage teach regarding sin and forgiveness?
    - b. How does this passage function in the Book of II Samuel as a whole, and how does it illumine the book as a whole?
  3. *Application and Proclamation.* Follow steps described in Lesson 14.

- Lesson 23.** Survey and Interpretation, and Evaluation and Application. II Samuel 13-20.
1. Survey this section, employing the suggestions under Lesson 5 (1).
  2. *Interpretation.* Using key verses and strategic areas as a basis, interpret the story of Absalom's rebellion. What are the main elements of this story? Why was the story placed here? Implications?
  3. *Application and Proclamation.* Follow steps described in Lesson 14.

**Lesson 24.** Survey of Books as Wholes. The Book of Kings (I, II Kings).  
Survey the Book of Kings, employing the steps outlined in Lesson 1.

- Lesson 25.** Interpretation, and Evaluation/Application, and Proclamation. I Kings 3:3-15; and 11:1-13.  
Trace the flow of thought, and interpret I Kings 3:3-15; and 11:1-13. What is the meaning of each of these passages? How do these passages relate to one another, and how do they illumine the portrait of Solomon as presented in the Book of I Kings? Evaluate and apply the teachings of this material, and develop a proclamation outline.

- Lesson 26.** Interpretation. I Kings 8.  
Identify the major structural features in Ch. 8. Using these structural features as a basis, or point of focus, interpret Solomon's dedication of the temple. How does ch. 8 illumine the surrounding context?

- Lesson 27.** Interpretation. I Kings 16:29-22:40
1. Study the Elijah narrative, using the skills you have developed in observation, interrogation, interpretation, evaluation and application, and proclamation.



2. **Prepare to enter into class discussion on the meaning of this material, and its function within the Book of Kings as a whole.**

Lesson 28. Survey and Interpretation, and Evaluation and Application. II Kings 17:7-41; 25:1-30.

1. Survey these segments, employing the suggestions under Lesson 2.
2. *Interpretation.* Using key verses and strategic areas you have identified, interpret 25:1-30. What is the meaning of this segment? How does this segment bring the book to a climax? Why did the writer thus bring the book to a climax?
3. *Synthesis.* How does this segment function within the entire corpus of Joshua-II Kings? How does it illumine this material as a whole? Why placed here? Implications?
4. *Application and Proclamation.* Follow steps described in Lesson 14.

Lesson 29. **The Book of Ruth (final exam).**

1. **Apply the suggestions of Lesson 27 to the Book of Ruth.**
2. **This study should indicate your skills in inductive Bible study, and should represent a synthesis of previous studies in the Historical Books insofar as they relate to an understanding of the Book of Ruth.**
3. **Note strengths and weaknesses in your understanding and application of method.**

## VII. Select Bibliography

In addition to general Introductions and Theologies of the Old Testament, the following studies may prove helpful:

- Ackroyd, Peter R. "The Historical Literature." in The Hebrew Bible and its Modern Interpreters, ed. Douglas A. Knight and Gene M. Tucker. Chico, CA: Scholars, 1985.
- Brueggemann, Walter. "The Kerygma of the Deuteronomistic Historian." Interpretation 22 (1968): 387-401.
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- de Vaux, Roland. "Method in the Study of Early Hebrew History." pp. 15-29, in The Bible and Modern Scholarship, ed. J. Philip Hyatt. Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1965.
- Denton, R.C., ed. The Idea of History in the Ancient Near East. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1955.
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- Romer, T. The Future of The Deuteronomistic History. BELT, no. 147. Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2000.
- von Rad, Gerhard. Studies in Deuteronomy. London: SCM Press, 1953.
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- Weinfeld, Moshe. Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic School. Oxford: Clarendon, 1972.
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- Wolff, Hans Walter. "The Kerygma of the Deuteronomistic Historical Work." pp. 83-100, in The Vitality of Old Testament Traditions, ed. Walter Brueggemann and Hans Walter Wolff. Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1975.
- Wyatt, Nicholas. "The Old Testament Historiography of the Exilic Period." Studia Theologica 33 (1979): 45-68.